

*Vef* 15

# COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA



REPORT 1957-1963

FOURTH ASSEMBLY OF THE  
LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION  
JULY 30 — AUGUST 11, 1963  
HELSINKI · FINLAND

## **Committee on Latin America**

### *Chairman :*

The Rev. FRIEDRICH HÜBNER, Dr. theol.  
Rockenhof 1, Hamburg-Volksdorf, Germany

### *Members :*

The Rev. MELVIN A. HAMMARBERG, D.D.  
700 South Snelling Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA  
The Rev. HENRIK HAUGE, D.D.  
Blindernveien 19, Blindern, Norway  
The Rev. ÅKE KASTLUND  
Jakobsbergsgatan 19, Stockholm, Sweden  
The Rev. ERNESTO SCHLIEPER, D.D.  
Caixa postal 14, São Leopoldo, RGS, Brazil  
The Rev. EARL J. TREUSCH, D.D.  
500-365 Hargrave Street, Winnipeg 2, Manitoba,  
Canada

### *Director :*

The Rev. STEWART W. HERMAN, Litt.D.  
50 Madison Avenue, New York 10, N.Y., USA

### *Field Secretary :*

The Rev. GUIDO TORNQUIST  
Apartado Aéreo 20023, Bogotá 2, Colombia

# COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

---



"Christ Today"

REPORT 1957-1963

*Document No. 15*

FOURTH ASSEMBLY OF THE  
LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION  
JULY 30 — AUGUST 11, 1963  
HELSINKI · FINLAND

Additional copies can be secured from  
The Lutheran World Federation  
17 Route de Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland

*Imprimerie La Concorde, Lausanne  
Printed in Switzerland*

## Preface

This is one in a series of reports which covers the activities of the Commissions, Committees and administrative units of the Lutheran World Federation in the period between the 1957 Minneapolis Assembly and the present time. These reports are being sent together with a number of other documents to the official participants in the forthcoming Assembly in Helsinki, in order that they may have adequate information about our work.

Some of the reports describe the studies which the Commissions have conducted ; some are submitted as bases for study and use in the churches.

This applies especially to those reports which come from our Study Commissions. These groups have no administrative unit ; their members have given generously of their own time in preparing these studies. We are very grateful to them for this work.

The various operational Commissions, Committees and Departments of the Lutheran World Federation present six-year reports prepared by the heads of the administrative units. These documents tell the story of the world-wide program of the Lutheran World Federation in theological co-operation, world mission, radio work, world service, community development service, the special task in Latin America, information and inter-confessional research.

The primary purpose of these reports is to give information in written form for all who participate in the Fourth Assembly. It is our hope, therefore, that the reports will be read in advance of our meeting. We can then more intelligently assess the work of the Lutheran World Federation, debate the issues more vigorously and plan more effectively for the future.

We commend this report for your study and consideration.

Easter 1963  
Geneva, Switzerland

*Kurt Schmidt-Clausen, Dr. theol.*  
Executive Secretary of  
The Lutheran World Federation

What have we been doing since 1957 and where do we stand in 1963?

In retrospect the years between 1952 and 1957 — as reflected in the first LWF-LA report which was presented at the Minneapolis Assembly — seem incredibly uncomplicated. It was an “era of innocence” devoted primarily to gathering up refugees, developing an effective diaspora ministry and strengthening the total Lutheran witness in Latin America. It was a period of optimistic convalescence from global war and renewed hope in the future, based largely on the fact that Latin America had been helped more than it had been hurt by World War II, even though the Lutheran church in some of its parts had been adversely affected.

By contrast the period 1957–1963 has been one of cumulative complexity, both inside and outside the Church. For years the Cold War had flashed like summer lightning on the distant horizons of the Western hemisphere, but the growl of its thunder was barely audible. Russia and China seemed far away. Asia and Africa, it was thought, would keep them busy. Latin America was in its own way materialistic but seemed immune to ideological Marxism. Economic dislocation and social upheaval were nothing new. Few prophets foresaw the total wave of rebellion — “the revolution of rising expectations” — which would soon provide Communism with a foothold in Cuba and require Christianity to take a second look at itself. Roman Catholic leaders were already aware that the position of their church was very precarious, but Protestantism was no less in jeopardy. All too often the fullness of the Evangelical witness was inadequately expressed by Protestants suffering from a catacomb complex. In some cases the “catacomb” was a sociological ghetto, in other cases a millenial movement.

It now appears that the Third Latin American Lutheran Conference which occurred a few months after Castro captured Havana and the Pope first announced an "ecumenical council" was not so much the beginning of a new era as the ending of an old one. Nevertheless the meeting at Buenos Aires was a major milestone. It was marked by an excellent resolution regarding the desirability of increased "contact, communication, and cooperation" among Lutherans, both nationally and internationally. Such a goal is still necessary and worthy of fulfillment, but a question deeper than the common purposes of one confessional group confronts the whole Christian Church in Latin America today, namely, its relevance to a revolutionary situation. It will require a strenuous effort on our part to keep abreast of the changes occurring here.

Of all the regions of the world, Latin America was the one with which Lutherans were least familiar when LWF-LA came into existence back in 1952. The loyal participation of six national committees — Brazil, Canada, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United States — has brought a gradual growth of recognition and general support during the past decade, not only throughout the other Member Churches of LWF but also among the mission societies and agencies concerned with work among seamen, students etc. Even though much of Latin America still remains *terra incognita*, its shores no longer seem entirely strange and hostile, as though Lutherans had no business there. Changing relations with the Roman Catholic Church and the menace of Communism are partly — but only partly — responsible for this. The need for an active Lutheran church in Latin America has been acknowledged.

After a general summary of the past six years in terms of LWF-LA program and its fruits, this account will conclude with some further considerations of a general nature. Obviously the future of the Church will not be determined only by its ability to grow quantitatively bigger and stronger but by its increasing capacity for communicating the love of God to all men both in word and in deed. The spiritual arena of today is located

not so much within the narrow confines of the innumerable churches with which Latin America is already fairly well-equipped, but in the universities, in the city slums, in industry and among the disinherited on the land. It is outside the institutional Church that the social revolution must be confronted. Unfortunately, the first natural reaction of a "historic" confession in the midst of instability and change is to seek refuge in tradition rather than to plow a new furrow. The extent to which the Lutheran church — especially its outpost congregations — can respond to the challenge of its environment and survive is open to serious question, unless the signs of the times can be correctly deciphered.

## I . Progress towards Lutheran Unity

When the Third Latin American Lutheran Conference met at Buenos Aires in 1959 the process which had begun at Curitiba, Brazil in 1951 was virtually complete, namely, bringing all Lutherans into personal contact with each other on a regional level. At each successive meeting, participation had increased and the climate became more cordial. In addition to the LWF-related churches and congregations, the three districts of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (in Argentina, Brazil and the Caribbean), the German Evangelical La Plata Synod, the faith missions and the seamen's pastors were now represented. But a big problem remained : how to promote this same sort of fellowship more effectively on a national level and at more frequent intervals ?

Previous regional conferences had been productive of two or three very practical projects. The idea of a common publishing program was first broached at the first conference in Curitiba and again at Petropolis in 1954. Since 1956 annual (except 1961) "consultations" had been held at Buck Hill Falls in the US.

These deliberations resulted, thanks to the firm financial support of the US churches, in various concrete projects such as the Spanish Hymnal and Service Book (*Culto Cristiano*), translation of a New Testament Commentary (Lenski), and preparation of a Spanish edition of Luther's Writings. Finally, a Lutheran corporation *Publicaciones El Escudo* with its special imprint and Luther rose seal was established in 1960 for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a high standard of excellence in this field. The year of this Fourth LWF Assembly will mark the beginning of actual publication, of the *Culto Cristiano*, the *Ritual Cristiano* (pastor's handbook) the first four volumes of the Lenski Commentary and the first two volumes of the Luther Edition. Other books and magazines have been sponsored, especially *Ekklesia* which is edited at José C. Paz by members of the theological faculty. The Finnish National Committee generously printed two booklets in editions of 10,000 copies each as a donation to LWF-LA in 1962, namely *El Catecismo Minor de Lutero* and *Martin Lutero, El Padre del Luteranismo*. A LWF-LA grant made possible the start of a Brazilian youth periodical *Igreja em Nosos Dias* and other Portuguese publications.

Another very important project emerged from Petropolis : the founding of a theological seminary for the whole Spanish-speaking area. Since 1956 the *Facultad Luterana de Teología* at José C. Paz, under the splendid leadership of Rector Bela Lesko, has graduated 24 young men, including the class of 1962. Its alumni include not only pastors from Argentina, but from Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. For three years there have been annual interfaculty meetings with the *Escola Teologica* (Theological School) at São Leopoldo which trains men for Portuguese-speaking Brazil. Exchanges of students and professors have become a regular part of this interchange. The operating costs as well as the provision of the physical plant at José C. Paz have been underwritten primarily by LWF-LA and the United Lutheran Church in America (now LCA) in approximately equal shares. Interested churches and single congregations in Latin America contributed substantially to

the regular budget. Negotiations whereby the La Plata Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile with the help of the *Kirchliches Aussenamt* will henceforth provide a full-time professor are far advanced.

The proposal which emerged from the Buenos Aires Conference in 1959, however, was of a more general nature and less susceptible of immediate implementation than a publication program or the establishment of a seminary. In recommending the desirability of still greater "contact, communication and cooperation", it had in mind the establishment of all-Lutheran committees or councils on the national level. In two or three cases closer coordination has indeed occurred. Much of the spirit of unity prevalent today among the three bodies in Argentina is owing to the good work of the National Committee in which all participated. The Venezuela Lutheran Council has united the activities of all LWF-related congregations in that country since 1959 but there is no organized entity which includes the Missouri Synod Mission, too. Years ago an all-inclusive Lutheran Ministers Association was set up in Colombia — including both Colombians and non-Colombians — which recently has taken a new lease on life and seems to be moving in the direction of a council with lay participation. Early in 1963 a Lutheran Council was formed in Ecuador, consisting of both the LWF-related parishes and of the World Mission Prayer League.

As so often happens, the day-by-day cultivation of fellowship on the local level has to contend with diverse ethnic and linguistic problems which are more difficult to manage than occasional participation in regional conferences. It must be confessed that efforts to achieve effective communication between various Lutheran groups in a given country — or even in a single city — have failed as often as they have succeeded. The lines of communications are not kept open. Common action is frequently handicapped or threatened because of "non-theological" factors. It is here that the bond of confessional unity proves to be weaker than ties of tongue or homeland, even within the congregation.

In an effort to cope with the problem of communication — both internal and external — and so bring the discussion of cooperation closer home, two “Communications Conferences” were held in 1962, one in Guatemala for the northern area and one in Argentina for the south. This arrangement had several advantages. More people could attend each meeting at less travel expense per person. Moreover, each area could concentrate on its own type of problem, in view of the fact that the small, scattered diaspora in the Caribbean area consists of relatively young congregations dependent largely on outside support, whereas the main weight of the Lutheran constituency in the south (Brazil, Argentina and Chile) is centered in well-organized synods. The idea of separate conferences was so successful that the southern area formally recommended their continuance on a biennial basis to tackle specific themes systematically, interspersed by regional (all-Latin America) conferences at six year intervals.

Under this arrangement the custom of having annual conferences of LWF-related pastors in the Caribbean area will no doubt continue, namely, in the years between the proposed biennial conferences, unless the local or national conferences tend to require more time and attention. The first so-called Caribbean pastors’ conference was called in 1955 at Cali, Colombia, and was attended by six pastors from four countries. By 1957 in Caracas there were 12 pastors present and the following year at Mexico City there were 9. When the next meeting occurred in 1960 at Bogota 20 pastors participated. After the all-Latin American conference in Buenos Aires in 1959 the presence of practically all the Colombian pastors swelled the roster of participants to 94 and at Quito the next year the number was 16.

Thus the number of pastors has increased and the common interest of the churches has grown, so that the 1962 meeting at Antigua — with virtually all Missouri pastors present — rose to 50 and the number at José C. Paz was equally as large.

Out of closer cooperation in the Caribbean area have come plans for a new theological training center to be located in Mexico or Colombia. In order to make room for the full participation of all Lutheran groups, regardless of unresolved doctrinal differences, it was agreed to establish "one seminary with one or more faculties". For various reasons, involving also the matter of location, at least two or three more years will probably pass before the new seminary begins to function. Meanwhile important theological conversations have been initiated in Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela, leading, in the first two instances, to agreement on the doctrine of the Church. It is to be expected that these efforts will notably contribute toward the establishment of national Lutheran entities in the place of free conferences. Unfortunately the chief hindrance to full participation — especially so far as the German and other foreign language groups are concerned — is still sociological rather than doctrinal and, under present circumstances, presents a rather formidable obstacle to unity.

During the "uncomplicated" years, to which previous reference has been made, Lutherans all over Latin America, especially those who had suffered disabilities because of national origin or those who arrived from Europe as DPs and refugees, perceived the significance of giving joint expression to their common faith and were thankful for its practical manifestation in a supernational organization such as the Lutheran World Federation. The situation was not unlike the first feelings which the concept of the United Nations evoked among peoples universally weary of war and eager for world peace. But as emergencies recede and crises melt away, old thought forms and ingrained attitudes tend to reassert themselves. This has been happening recently, not only in Latin America but apparently in other regions of the world as well as in other aspects of LWF activity.

Reversion to pre-war patterns has been resisted most effectively wherever the Lutheran church in Latin America has begun to identify itself with Latin America, responds to the challenge

of its environment and ceases to be a mere appendage of a North American mission or the overseas branch of a European body. In this respect there can be no doubt that the whole cause of Lutheran unity in Latin America has made significant strides forwards.

## II . LWF-LA Inter-Church Aid Program

*In the Caribbean area.* With the stationing of a regular pastor in Ecuador in 1955 and the establishment of an itinerant ministry in Central America in 1957, the first stage of LWF-LA diaspora work in the Caribbean area was completed, namely to supply pastors to all of the larger groups of unchurched Lutherans. A second stage had already begun, that is the provision of a building fund to encourage the erection or acquisition of churches and parsonages in all of the capitals and some of the provincial cities. But it was obvious that the ultimate goal — namely self-support and self-propagation — would not be reached so long as these scattered parishes continued to look abroad for help and pastoral care rather than to themselves or to each other. Indeed the hope was to have them contributing their share — as givers rather than receivers — to the total Christian witness in the community and the nation in the shortest reasonable time.

Many gratifying evidences of inner growth and maturation have appeared. For one thing, the first ad hoc committees of inexperienced laymen have gradually developed into responsible church councils with an increasingly sensitive awareness of the special nature of the Church and its work. For another thing, the loan funds provided by LWF-LA to assist building programs have, with few exceptions, been repaid promptly or

continue to be carefully administered as revolving loan funds. The very first loan — granted to Lima, Peru in 1953 — will be paid back on schedule in 1963. Meanwhile many of the congregations have not overlooked the necessity of contributing to the needs of the others, namely, in making gifts to the seminary, to brethren in distress and even to the general work of the LWF, especially missions.

The total amount of money invested in Latin America through the LWF-LA Committee from 1952-1962 inclusive is approximately \$1,534,000 (not including capital funds in the form of grants and loans totaling \$800,500). Of the first amount almost 50 per cent, or about \$75,000 per year, has gone into the establishment and the support of the diaspora work in the Caribbean area, which contains only about 1 per cent of the Latin American Lutherans.

At the same time it must be kept in mind that most of these congregations — of which about 20 are still receiving some help today — raise larger sums of money than they receive. Moreover the original investment of capital funds, both grants and loans, represents no more than 20%-40% of total cost of the property which has been constructed or acquired.

The 1960 appointment of Pastor Guido Tornquist as LWF-LA field representative in the Caribbean area has contributed very substantially to the consolidation and greater integration of the total Lutheran witness there. With headquarters in Bogota, his special responsibility has been to keep in closer contact with the congregations of Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Central America and — eventually — Mexico for the purpose of counseling the pastors and church councils, coordinating the work that should be done jointly and — in short — implementing the resolution of Buenos Aires with respect to closer contact, communication and coordination. The fact that Pastor Tornquist is a Brazilian with solid experience as a parish pastor and a command of several languages, exemplifies the quality of regional leadership which is needed for the development of a flourishing indigenous church.

*In the southern area.* The LWF-LA, despite its interest in and support of the total Lutheran enterprise in Latin America, must be careful to avoid giving the impression of taking credit for everything that has been happening there, most especially in the established synods of the ABC countries, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. Lutheran immigrants had been arriving in these countries in substantial numbers for more than a century and had received much support from their old homelands, particularly Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. A good deal later the North American mission boards arrived. Today both the Kirchliches Aussenamt of the German Evangelical Church and the three major North American bodies (LCA, TALC and Missouri Synod) are supplying — not only collectively, but individually — far larger resources of personnel and funds than the LWF-LA has at its disposal. Nevertheless the LWF agency has played a significant role in this southern area also. One far reaching form of help was to strengthen the central fabric of the Member Churches in Brazil and Chile by establishing revolving loan funds on condition that the churches also contribute a stipulated amount. Monies advanced from these funds to local parishes enabled them to proceed promptly with extensive building programs and establish new congregations while keeping a jump ahead of inflation and avoiding exorbitant commercial interest rates. Another form of help was to supplement available funds for the immediate purchase of automobiles for pastors of multiple parishes who were wasting their time and energy on public transport.

Student work in Brazilian and Chilean universities was launched with special assistance from LWF-LA at a time when the churches were unable to initiate any new work of this type. It began in 1955 with the appointment of Karl Ernst Neisel in Porto Alegre, Brazil. A second pastor, Richard Wangen, was assigned to Curitiba in 1956 then reassigned to Sao Paulo for a second term of five years. Meanwhile a Brazilian, Godofredo Boll, took up the work in Porto Alegre as successor to Neisel, and the first Brazilian Lutheran Student Congress was called in 1961. A similar start was made in Santiago, Chile in

1960 with the calling of Siegwart Berendes under the joint auspices of three agencies : LWF-LA, the Kirchliches Aussenamt and the World Christian Student Federation. He was to be both Lutheran student pastor and national secretary of the Evangelical Student Movement (MEC). One of the urgent recommendations of the 1962 Communications Conference at José C. Paz was that a special conference on student work be convened for the southern area of Sao Leopoldo in 1963. The importance of Christian work in universities and other schools of higher learning where Marxist materialism has made such great inroads is regarded as being of top priority.

In addition to other seminary grants, theological scholarships were awarded to ministerial candidates both at Sao Leopoldo and at José C. Paz. Provision was made for a more adequate pastoration of smaller linguistic groups either by making possible quarterly visits from Buenos Aires to Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay or by finding qualified men for full-time work with the larger groups, as in Sao Paulo where assistance is still being given to the Hungarians, Latvians and Scandinavians. In all cases however, such activity is initiated and maintained by the LWF-LA only with the concurrence of the existing synodical authority ; the linguistic groups are incorporated into the church from the start.

By far the most interesting new development in LWF-LA assistance to the established synods has occurred in the Pelotas District of the Synod of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Here just north of the Uruguayan border is a diaspora area peopled by the descendants of North German immigrants. Because of the chronic shortage of pastors, many of them belong to "free" churches served by untrained volunteers or remain unchurched. In view of the fact that most of these people now speak Portuguese and also because of the success of Pastor Richard Wangen in serving Lutheran youth and students in Curitiba, the LWF-LA was asked in 1961 to provide two pastors from North America for the Pelotas District who would serve the

Synod as "home mission" developers and apply North American methods of parish life, especially in the field of stewardship and evangelism, to their work. The search for two qualified men began but it was realized that the recruitment and the preparation (especially language training) would require more than a year. Temporary help was then solicited from the ALC Mission in Brazil which assigned Pastor David Nelson to the town of Cangussu in answer to the urgent request of District President Simon. A flourishing congregation has been established and the arrangement was extended to cover Pastor Nelson's unexpired term. Since then two additional pastors recruited by LWF-LA have arrived in Brazil for language training and assignment in the Pelotas District.

At several other points there has been very close cooperation between the ALC Mission and the much larger and older Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession. Other missionaries have been assigned to service in the various synods, for example, at Curitiba as youth and student pastor for one year, at Ponta Grossa in Parana during the regular pastor's furlough and more recently to the vacant parish at Juiz de Fora in Minas Gerais. A basic agreement governing relations between the two bodies was signed in 1959 shortly after the ALC took over the mission enterprise which had been launched by the World Mission Prayer League in the State of Parana a few years earlier. The agreement, which also refers to theological training, production of parish literature in Portuguese, etc. has served to maintain amicable working relationships, although its full implementation has been handicapped by the difficulty of keeping in close contact. Despite the problem of overcoming vast distances the time seems ripe for regular meetings involving not only these two bodies but also the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (Missouri Synod) as well.

The launching of a new mission enterprise in Chile took place in a slightly different way and corresponds more closely to the image of cooperation projected by the Buenos Aires Conference.

The ULCA Board of Foreign Missions initiated conversations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile 1960, and invited the President of the Church (Dean Friedrich Karle) to the United States to work out a basic agreement whereby Spanish work would be developed by North American missionaries within the context of the existing German speaking parishes. An experienced pastor (Levon Spath) was selected to move from Argentina to Chile on January 1, 1963 to begin the work. LWF-LA assigned a young Ecuadorian, Edisson Osorio, recently graduated from the José C. Paz seminary, to assist him for one year. In all such negotiations — both in Brazil and Chile — the Kirchliches Aussenamt of the Evangelical Church in Germany, which has its own contractual relationships with these churches, has not only been kept informed but demonstrated its sympathetic support.

Reference should also be made to the excellent spirit of moderation which prevails in Argentina where the three predominant Lutheran bodies can derive great satisfaction from the fact that consultation and coordination have largely superseded the occasional recriminations of previous years. All three churches shared in the preparation for the Buenos Aires Conference. The two seminaries keep in touch with each other, namely, the Concordia Seminary (Missouri Synod) and the Facultad de Teología at José C. Paz, and are participating in the translation of the Spanish edition of Luther's Writings. The La Plata Synod shares in the administration of the José C. Paz seminary along with the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Argentina. Thus a sound basis has been laid for a common approach to problems of church extension.

One of the biggest difficulties confronting Lutheran work in Latin America continues to be the shortage of parish pastors. Even if the 400 pastors were divided more or less equally among the total baptized membership of nearly 9,000,000, the number of members per pastor would average out at 2250. This corresponds to the maximum membership that can possibly be cared for adequately by one man without full-time

assistance of any kind. But the fact is that many pastors have very few parishioners whereas others have far larger numbers, often divided into as many as a dozen or more congregations and preaching points scattered over a large territory. The only adequate solution to this problem of shortage is the recruitment and training of more pastors in Latin America, rather than in Europe or North America. Progress in this direction in recent years has been encouraging. The very existence of good training facilities, both in Brazil and Argentina, seems to have evoked a prompt response in congregations and even churches which had never before produced ministerial candidates. This is particularly significant for the future of the churches of immigrant origin, and even more important for the eventual transition — which is happening now on a family-by-family basis — from the old mother tongue to a new one. On the whole, LWF-LA has invested \$30,171 in São Leopoldo and \$201,625.26 in José C. Paz, not counting such minor "extras" as special lectures, in the interfaculty meetings, etc.

In summary, it would be accurate to say that LWF-LA has endeavored to be of special assistance to the established synods at those points where the immediate investment of funds or personnel would help the churches launch out in new directions with a fair assurance that self-support would grow as the new work proved to be an indispensable element of the church's program. This was the motivating thought behind the support of a literature program, student work, service to linguistic minorities, the establishment of revolving loan funds, and — above all — to the development of facilities for first-class theological instruction.

### III . Relevance to Revolution

The urge to improve his own lot is as old as man himself; the urge to improve the lot of others is not as old and much less instinctive! Only in very recent years has the raising of

the very low standard of living of the majority of the world's inhabitants become a matter of urgent concern both to them and to those enjoying a relatively high standard of living. It was a constellation of special circumstances which produced in Asia, Africa and Latin America what has been called "the revolution of rising expectations". First the demand for raw material during World War II raised prices ; then wages rose, resulting in a vast new demand for consumer goods. Meanwhile radical improvements in all means of communications (including movies, radio and subsequently television) titillated the appetites of people who suddenly saw their dreams crystallize within reach. No less significant was the fact that a whole new world was ostensibly being built beyond the so-called Iron Curtain on the premise that the old order had only to be destroyed.

There were of course other aspects to this picture. The wartime demand for raw materials had tapered off and prices had dropped, but the hunger for manufactured goods remained and their cost was rising. Living conditions were better in urban areas — especially in the industrial communities — which inevitably encouraged migration to the cities, even though it meant living in slum districts. Social services and preventive medicine were contributing — far more than a rise in the birth rate — to a rapid rate of growth which became known as the "population explosion". The ultimate effect of it all was that the only thing needed to bring impatient people to the brink of desperation was a flood, drought, hurricane or earthquake to tip the living standards downward.

Neither LWF-LA nor the Lutheran churches in Latin America had given much thought to these things until the last few years. The task of the Church was, and is, the cure of souls, the administration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the Gospel. Of course charitable funds were collected and dispensed for the indigent and in a few instances there were provisions made for the orphaned and the elderly. Medical, agricultural and other social missions received relatively little

attention in Latin America — less than in Asia and Africa. In view of the fact that governments, fully furnished with elaborate and expensive social security systems, had assumed primary responsibility for public welfare, the Church with its slender resources was not drawn into this area of service. God however has ways of underscoring the importance of the widow's mite.

A succession of floods and droughts, as well as reports of extreme hunger in Brazil, impelled Lutheran World Relief in partnership with Church World Service (USA) to send a representative to Rio de Janeiro (Lutheran Pastor John Nasstrom) in 1959 to begin the process of obtaining favorable legislation for the importation of relief supplies and of organizing a distribution system based on the Evangelical Confederation of Churches. About the same time the same two agencies dispatched the Rev. Theo Tschuy to Santiago, Chile, in a similar capacity. When a disastrous earthquake wreaked havoc in South-Central Chile only 18 months later, the all-Protestant agency, *Ayuda Cristiana Evangelica*, was able to spring to help with its resources of food, clothing and medicines. On a much smaller scale, some of the individual congregations in the capital centres of Peru, Colombia and Venezuela have undertaken and provide modest, but important, social assistance in the slums, not merely among the indigent, elderly or unemployed of their own community.

It has been apparent from the beginning, however, that the basic social needs require more than an ad hoc response to occasional emergencies, no matter how chronic. Economic and social problems had to be tackled at their roots. The distribution of food, clothing and other supplies must be linked to constructive solutions. Change is needed, not charity. Thus the Chilean ACE laid out a long-range plan to set up social centers in the rebuilt communities, and the Lutheran church, through its earthquake funds from Germany, established 24 dwellings in Puerto Montt, an agricultural school in Victoria,

and a trade training center in Frutillar. Recently Dr. Karle in a special ceremony transferred the 24 dwellings to the Chilean government authorities at Puerto Montt. In Southern Brazil church leaders were reexamining the local economy in an effort to see what common action could be taken. One of the obvious findings was that agricultural methods needed to be brought up-to-date and that new and improved products had to be found or developed. Toward the end of 1962 special grants from Svenska Lutherhjälpen, Brot für die Welt and the National Lutheran Council (USA) began to flow toward pilot projects sponsored by Brazilian Lutherans for the equipment of model farms, agricultural training centers, medical clinics and a school for Amazonian Indians, etc. Known as "community development projects" this type of help seems at the present moment to constitute the most effective way to strengthen the Christian witness in the midst of a social revolution which, for lack of such witness, could conceivably destroy the Church.

It is not anticipated that social assistance of this kind will solve all economic problems, nor even provide the Lutheran church with a good competitive position in the ideological sweepstakes for the soul of Latin America. It is not the final answer to Communism. But in the form of pilot projects grounded in Christian love it revives an indispensable aspect of the proclamation of the Gospel which came to diaconic expression in the 19th century, but has not found its proper expression in the 20th century. Too many of the trails once blazed by the Christian's concern for the dignity of man as a child of God have, in effect, become public highways maintained by government. Community development in its various forms seems to offer the Church new opportunities for trails-blazing in a world which seeks something better than institutionalized charity and whose abandoned children need foster homes more than orphanages. The overwhelming magnitude of human need raises a serious doubt as to whether the strength of the Church should not be conserved and used solely in preaching the Gospel. Problems of developing an adequate food and water supply,

public health services, urban and rural reforms etc. are obviously so enormous that any Christian witness in the form of pilot projects will not be effective unless the effort of all the churches is coordinated properly. In most cases it would require the pooled resources of many churches to tackle even one local problem on a scale sufficiently broad and deep to provide a national or international example. For this purpose national councils of churches in several countries have already provided the nucleus of a structure upon which solid social action can be built. In fact the effectiveness of such councils can be measured by the effectiveness of their practical programs of social action.

It is at this point that the radical alteration in relationships with the Roman Catholic Church assumes particular significance and the unlimited extent of the potential for change in Latin America becomes apparent. The year 1959 marks a tremendous turning point in these relationships, not merely because the Communist shadow of Fidel Castro began to loom large over the Western Hemisphere, but because Pope John XXIII in what seemed to be an unpremeditated statement threw out the first suggestion regarding an ecumenical council and seemed to imply that all Christians would be welcome to attend. At least that was the way the announcement was at first understood. The status of Protestants was suddenly transformed by the prestige of his proclamation from that of "heretics" to "separated brethren". Almost overnight the climate began to change.

Evangelicals in Latin America had long been accustomed to a variety of treatment at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, most of it prejudicial. More than a decade of severe violence had recently come to an end in Colombia, largely as the result of a change of government, but isolated instances of deadly violence were beginning to occur in Mexico where a resurgent hierarchy seemed to be encouraging persecution. In most of the other countries the attitude ranged from barely tolerant to indifferent to mildly repressive to oppressive to hostile. Friendly contacts between representatives of the two confessions were

not uncommon but they were far from frequent and usually on a purely personal level. On the whole our Lutheran pastors probably had better relations with their Roman Catholic counterparts than most other Protestants, partly because of national or linguistic ties to the European homeland (including even joint services on patriotic occasions), partly because of mutual respect for common theological and ecclesiastical traditions and partly because Lutherans generally leaned over backward to avoid proselytism, especially in the crass form exercised by more zealous sectarian missions.

Merely to list the various approaches which were initiated either by Lutherans or Catholics in at least a dozen Latin American countries of which we have some record would require considerable space. Suffice it to say that on the occasion of visits by distinguished LWF personalities — for instance, Presidents Lilje and Fry, Bishops Giertz, Askmark, Malmeström, Dietzfelbinger, Professors Hahn, Skydsgaard — there was invariably some formal contact with representatives of the Roman hierarchy at the level of papal nuntios, archbishops or bishops. In 1959 the LWF-LA Director together with a Roman Catholic delegate from the United States, traveled to Colombia as a special commission to consult with both Catholic and Evangelical leaders in order to make a report of findings for use as a guide in handling one-sided reports of the religious situation.

After the establishment of the LWF Special Commission on Inter-Confessional Research in 1958 LWF-LA strongly recommended that its special attention should be directed, not only to Europe and North America, but to Latin America. In 1961 Prof. Skydsgaard himself visited Mexico in conjunction with his US tour, and in August 1962 his successor, Dr. George Lindbeck, spent a month in South America on the eve of the Vatican Council, which he was to attend as an LWF observer. As a result of these visits — especially the timely one of Dr. Lindbeck — a whole new field of communication has been staked out which may lead to closer cooperation in two areas, namely, theological study and coordinated social action.

## **Concluding Comment**

At the end of ten years it may be said that the Committee on Latin America has occupied an unique position in the structure of LWF and has played an unusual role. Dissociated from any of the strictly "functional" tasks related to material relief, refugee resettlement, inter-church aid, theological study, mission outreach, stewardship promotion, exchange program and so on, it has actually been engaged almost constantly in all of them. Its main interest was defined geographically, that is, Latin America and the Lutheran church there, nothing more and nothing less.

Against this background the shift of emphasis during the past decade does not appear as a lack of specific purpose or clear policy, but as a deliberate endeavor to respond to the changing needs of the Church in a particular region. What started as an effort to gather up the stray sheep of our own fold and provide them with shepherds was bound to evolve into an effort to obey the Master's injunction to open the fold to all stray sheep and... to feed His lambs.

Much is being said in these days about bringing the whole Gospel to the whole man. The LWF is no superchurch, nor is it better equipped to perform this task than its Member Churches, but it is designed as a joint instrument for mutual solace and service. Only to the degree that LWF-LA has succeeded in being such an instrument can it be said to have succeeded.

STEWART W. HERMAN  
DIRECTOR  
COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

**Table of Congregations Established  
with LWF-LA Help**

The following congregations were called into existence — or revived — by pastors under appointment from LWF-LA :

1952	VENEZUELA	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana, Congregacion de la Resurrection de <i>Caracas</i> (German, Latvian and Hungarian chapters) Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de la Ciudad de <i>Valencia</i>
	COLOMBIA	Congregacion San Mateo, <i>Bogota</i> Congregacion San Martin, <i>Cali</i> Congregacion San Marcos, <i>Medellin</i> Congregacion Luterana, <i>Barranquilla</i>
1953	COLOMBIA	Congregacion de San Miguel, <i>Pasto</i> Congregacion Luterana, <i>Manizales</i>
1954	EL SALVADOR	Evangelical Lutheran Church, <i>San Salvador</i>
	HONDURAS	Evangelical Lutheran Church, <i>Tegucigalpa</i>
	VENEZUELA	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de San Pablo, <i>Maracaibo</i> Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de la Ciudad de <i>Barquisimeto</i> Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de la Unidad Agricola de <i>Turen</i>
1955	COSTA RICA	Evangelical Lutheran Church, <i>San José</i>
	NICARAGUA	Evangelical Lutheran Church, <i>Managua</i>
	ECUADOR	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana, Congregacion del Aviento, <i>Quito</i>
	MEXICO	Congregacion Escandinava en Mexico, <i>Mexico City</i>
	VENEZUELA	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de <i>San Cristobal</i>
1956	ECUADOR	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana "El Salvador", <i>Guayaquil</i>
1957	BRAZIL	Comunidade Evangelica Luterana Hungara, <i>Sao Paulo</i>
1958	BRAZIL	Estonian Lutheran Congregation, <i>Sao Paulo</i>
1960	MEXICO	Evangelische Gemeinde deutscher Sprache, <i>Monterrey</i> , N. L. (in partnership with Kirchliches Aussenamt)
1961	BRAZIL	Scandinavian Lutheran Congregation (Skandinaviske Kirke) <i>Sao Paulo</i>
	PERU	Scandinavian-English-Spanish Ministry in <i>Lima</i> (full time)

**Table of Buildings Acquired  
with Help of Major Capital Grants (1952-1962)**

This listing — in chronological order — refers only to buildings which have been purchased or built with the help of LWF-LA capital funds, chiefly in the Caribbean area. It does not include, for instance, the lump sums of \$150,000 granted to establish the Church Extension Fund in Brazil or \$20,000 to launch a similar revolving loan fund in Chile and \$885,000 for reconstruction after the earthquake. The listing also does not include properties which are rented (e.g. San José, Costa Rica) or "borrowed" from other dominations (as in Medellin, Colombia, etc.) or on loan (as in Turen, Venezuela). In other words, these properties are *owned* outright and represent an investment of \$661,725 by LWF-LA, including \$274,341 grant and \$387,384 as loans. Of course the total value of these properties is worth at least three or four times that amount owing to the money raised locally. The amount of loans outstanding as on January 1, 1963 is \$302,574.22.

	<i>Cornerstone laid</i>	<i>Dedicated</i>
PERU		
Lima, Evangelical Lutheran Church. . . . .	1953	Aug. 1, 1954
ARGENTINA		
José C. Paz, main seminary building	Nov. 28, 1954	
COLOMBIA		
Cali, San Martin Church and parsonage . . . . .		Oct. 18, 1955
VENEZUELA		
Caracas, Resurrection Church. . .		Oct. 31, 1955
Caracas, parsonage (Hungarian and Latvian) . . . . .		Aug. 26, 1956
Caracas, Internado. . . . .		Oct. 1955
ARGENTINA		
Seminary, first Professor's house .	1956	
Seminary, second Professor's house	1957	
VENEZUELA		
Caracas, parsonage (German) . . .		March 17, 1957
MEXICO		
Mexico City, Church of the Holy Spirit (German) . . . . .	May 5, 1947	Pentecost 1958
ECUADOR		
Quito, Church of the Advent . . .		Nov. 30, 1958
PARAGUAY		
Asuncion Boarding Home . . . .	1958	

	<i>Cornerstone laid</i>	<i>Dedicated</i>
<b>VENEZUELA</b>		
Valencia, Evangelical Lutheran Church. . . . .		Apr. 26, 1959
<b>BRAZIL</b>		
Sao Paulo, Latvian Church. . . .		March 27, 1960
<b>COLOMBIA</b>		
Bogota, two parsonages . . . .		June 1961
<b>VENEZUELA</b>		
Maracaibo, San Pablo Church . .	Jan. 24, 1960	Nov. 27, 1961
<b>BRAZIL</b>		
Sao Paulo, Parish Center (Hungarian)		July 30, 1961
<b>BOLIVIA</b>		
La Paz, German Lutheran Church		Dec. 2, 1962
<b>ECUADOR</b>		
Guayaquil, parish house . . . .		Jan. 20, 1963

## APPENDIX III

**Table of Major Capital Grants (1952-1962)**  
 (from LWF-LA)

	<i>Grants</i> \$	<i>Loans</i> \$
<b>ARGENTINA</b>		
<i>José C. Paz</i> , Seminary buildings . . . . .	87,575.—	
<b>BOLIVIA</b>		
<i>La Paz</i> , German Lutheran Church . . . . .	5,000.—	10,000.—
<b>BRAZIL</b>		
Various Lutheran congregations . . . . .	40,800.—	15,000.—
( <i>Sao Paulo</i> : Hungarian parish center, Latvian Church, Evangelical Student Center, <i>Canguçu</i> : parsonage, San Manoel Church)		
Brazilian Revolving Loan Fund . . . . .	150,000.—	
<b>CHILE</b>		
Chilean Revolving Loan Fund . . . . .	20,000.—	
For church reconstruction after earthquake	27,011.10	
<b>COLOMBIA</b>		
<i>Bogota</i> , parsonage . . . . .	13,081.27	40,000.—
<i>Calí</i> , church and parsonage . . . . .	8,411.81	36,000.—
<b>ECUADOR</b>		
<i>Quito</i> , church . . . . .	5,000.—	18,000.—
<i>Guayaquil</i> , parish center . . . . .	10,000.—	25,000.—
<b>MEXICO</b>		
<i>Mexico City</i> , German Lutheran Church . . . . .	6,250.—	18,750.—
<b>PERU</b>		
<i>Lima</i> , church . . . . .	5,000.—	5,000.—
<b>PARAGUAY</b>		
<i>Asuncion</i> , Boarding Home . . . . .	10,000.—	
<b>VENEZUELA</b>		
<i>Barquisimeto</i> , church . . . . .	2,500.—	6,500.—
<i>Valencia</i> , church, parsonage, parish school	10,600.—	55,626.—
<i>Maracaibo</i> , church, parsonage . . . . .	19,757.48	67,005.34
<i>Caracas</i> , church and parsonage . . . . .	20,000.—	90,503.—
	440,986.66	387,384.34

## Documents and Reports for the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation

1. Circular No. 1 (April 10, 1962) to the National Committees, Member Churches and Recognized Congregations of the LWF
2. Information Bulletin No. 1 to Delegates and Official Visitors
3. Study Document on Justification
4. Study Document on the Nature of the Lutheran World Federation
5. Information Bulletin No. 2 to Delegates and Official Visitors
6. Report of the Executive Committee
7. Report of the Department of Theology
8. Polyglot Text of the Epistle to the Ephesians (in English, German, Swedish and Finnish)
9. Study Document of the Commission on Theology on Prayer in the Life of the Congregation
10. Report of the Special Commission on Inter-Confessional Research
11. Report of the Department of World Mission
12. Report of the LWF Broadcasting Service : Radio Voice of the Gospel
13. Report of the Department of World Service
14. Report of the Community Development Liaison and Validation Service
15. Report of the Committee on Latin America
16. Report of the Commission on Education
17. Report of the Commission on Inner Missions
18. Report of the Commission on Stewardship and Congregational Life
19. Report of the Committee on Student Work
20. Report of the Commission on International Affairs
21. Report of the News Bureau
22. Report of *Lutheran World / Lutherische Rundschau*
23. Report on Structure and Function of the LWF
24. Rules of Procedure for Fourth Assembly
25. Who's Who (list of official participants : in English only)
26. Assembly Manual
27. Presidential Address
28. Grace for the World (main lecture by Prof. Gloege)
29. Faith without Deeds? (main lecture by Prof. Brattgård)
30. Divided Humanity — United in Christ (main lecture by Prof. Waris)
31. The New Song of Praise (main lecture by Prof. Lumbantobing)
32. The One Church and the Lutheran Churches (main lecture by Prof. E. Clifford Nelson)

Note : Documents Nos. 27-32 will be distributed at the Assembly.

---

These materials are appearing, in most instances, in three languages — German, English and one of the Scandinavian languages.

